

**MONTGOMERY
NOTEBOOK***Cardin's Aid
Sought Over
Relocation of
Federal Jobs*

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Sen. Benjamin L. Cardin (D-Md.) dropped by the County Council this week for lunch and a wide-ranging conversation that touched on global warming, health care and presidential politics. But it was the local issues that concerned council members most. They enlisted Cardin's help in trying to ensure that thousands of federal jobs at the Parklawn Building in the Twinbrook neighborhood remain in the county.

Council President **Michael Knapp** (D-Upcounty) said House Majority Leader **Steny H. Hoyer** (D-Md.) is pressing to relocate some of the jobs to Prince George's County when the General Services Administration's lease expires in 2010. Council member **Marc Elrich** (D-At Large) said it was not "good policy for us to cannibalize each other."

Cardin promised to look into it, smiling as he said, "That's what we senators do. We referee fights among our congressional delegation."

In general, Cardin said, he agrees that jobs should not be relocated when space is available. But he said the delegation is also trying to help Prince George's develop land around its Metro stations.

Hoyer's press secretary, **Stephanie Lundberg**, said later that her boss is interested in ensuring that

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Tuesday Vote in 4th District

Prince George's is given equal consideration as a location. The county, she said in an e-mail, has been "overlooked and underutilized" for federal office space and offers lower cost options.

"It's important to consider the taxpayer dollars and the most cost-effective choice," she said.

Rep. **Chris Van Hollen** (D-Md.) has gotten involved, too. Responding to an inquiry from County Executive **Isiah Leggett** (D) last month, Van Hollen said in a letter that he shares Leggett's concern about the "potential relocation of thousands of federal employees from Rockville" and agrees that "rental costs alone should not dictate the location."

Voters in 4th District Poised for Special Election

Residents of Prince George's and Montgomery counties will soon get yet another chance to visit the polls, when Prince George's nonprofit executive **Donna F. Edwards** (D) faces **Peter James** (R) in a special election Tuesday to fill the seat of **Albert R. Wynn** (D), who resigned from Congress on May 31.

Edwards trounced Wynn during the Feb. 12 Democratic primary. That ended Wynn's 15-year tenure as a U.S. representative, but it didn't propel Edwards into Congress automatically. It merely gave her the right to face James, who won the Republican primary, in the November election.

Wynn's surprise resignation, before the end of his term, forced the special election. The winner will probably be sworn in within days of the election and will serve out the remainder of Wynn's term. Edwards and James will face each other again in November, with the winner taking the seat starting in January.

The 4th Congressional District encompasses parts of Montgomery and Prince George's. Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Committee Gets Taste Of Don Praisner's Style

Council member **Don Praisner** (D-Eastern County) made his debut this week at a Management and Fiscal Policy Committee meeting and showed he's no shrinking violet. Praisner, who was sworn in last week, brought to the table some of the no-nonsense style of his late wife, Marilyn, who held the seat for about 17 years.

Under consideration was a proposal to expand the number of union representatives on the board that oversees the county's \$3 billion employee retirement system. It was a heated discussion, in which council aides recommended against add-

ing members.

At one point, committee Chairman **Duchy Trachtenberg** (D-At Large) said she needed more information about the makeup of similar boards in other jurisdictions, to which Praisner said, "I'm not sure that has any rhyme or reason."

After hearing the pros and cons, Trachtenberg said she was inclined to put off a vote for a week until her questions were answered. But Praisner and council member **Valerie Ervin** (D-Silver Spring) were ready to proceed, and Trachtenberg deferred to them.

The vote was 2 to 1, with Praisner casting the lone vote against the expansion of the 13-member board, which he said would make it "too unwieldy."

New Planner Talks Plainly About House Sizes

The scene at the Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce's annual real estate breakfast last Friday might be a portent of things to come for the building industry.

On the one hand, real estate agent **Jane Fairweather** gave a gloom-and-doom report on the county's efforts to make some modest restrictions to house sizes, as a way to diminish complaints about mansionization. Fairweather was referring to a bill by council member **Roger Berliner** (D-Potomac-Bethesda), as well as a report by a task force Berliner convened.

She also spoke unhappily about new county taxes on real estate transactions, one of several ways the council and County Executive **Isiah Leggett** (D) attempted to fill the budget shortfall.

A few minutes later, up to the podium strolled **Rollin Stanley**, the county's new planning director, who has ruffled some feathers by telling developers their plans are "horrible" and by criticizing the county, which he said seems at times more concerned about due process than about getting well-designed communities.

Stanley said he wasn't too worried about big houses having to be a bit smaller. The market, he suggested, isn't going to want those big houses anyway because they will be too expensive to heat and cool and will be too big for the empty nesters and baby boomers who will be living in them.

"Bigger houses, many people think they are the next slums. They are too big, and people are having trouble selling them," he said.

What the future market really wants, he told the audience of business leaders, is smaller, more energy-efficient housing near public transit.

He said he hopes that Montgomery will be a leader. "Phoenix,

it's horrible. Shanghai, that's Phoenix on quaaludes," he said, referring to unregulated sprawl. "This is unsustainable. We can't keep going on like this."

"The mind-set in this country is wrong," said Stanley, a native of Canada who was the planning chief in St. Louis before arriving in Montgomery a few months ago.

After he spoke, emcee **Dee Metz**, a longtime fixture on the real estate scene, said: "It's wonderful to have someone who tells us how he really feels."